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Isolationism

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Summary and Keywords

For the United States, isolationism is best defined as avoidance of wars outside the Western Hemisphere, particularly in Europe; opposition to binding military alliances; and the unilateral freedom to act politically and commercially unrestrained by mandatory commitments to other nations. Until the controversy over American entry into the League of Nations, isolationism was never subject to debate. The United States could expand its territory, protect its commerce, and even fight foreign powers without violating its traditional tenets. Once President Woodrow Wilson sought membership in the League, however, Americans saw isolationism as a foreign policy option, not simply something taken for granted. A fundamental foreign policy tenet now became a faction, limited to a group of people branded as "isolationists." Its high point came during the years 1934–1937, when Congress, noting the challenge of the totalitarian nations to the international status quo, passed the neutrality acts to insulate the country from global entanglements.

Once World War II broke out in Europe, President Franklin D. Roosevelt increasingly sought American participation on the side of the Allies. Isolationists unsuccessfully fought FDR's legislative proposals, beginning with repeal of the arms embargo and ending with the convoying of supplies to Britain. The America First Committee (1940–1941), however, so effectively mobilized anti-interventionist opinion as to make the president more cautious in his diplomacy.

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If the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor permanently ended classic isolationism, by 1945 a "new isolationism" voiced suspicion of the United Nations, the Truman Doctrine, aid to Greece and Turkey, the Marshall Plan, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, and U.S. participation in the Korean War. Yet, because the "new isolationists" increasingly advocated militant unilateral measures to confront Communist Russia and China, often doing so to advance the fortunes of the Republican party, they exposed themselves to charges of inconsistency and generally faded away in the 1950s. Since the 1950s, many Americans have opposed various military involvements— including the ones in Vietnam, Iraq, and Afghanistan— but few envision returning to an era when the United States avoids all commitments.

Keywords: isolationism, internationalism, interventionism, World War I, Woodrow Wilson, League of Nations, Franklin D. Roosevelt, World War II, Harry S. Truman, Cold War

Defining Isolationism

Historians have traditionally defined classic or archetypical isolationism as avoidance of wars outside the Western Hemisphere, particularly in Europe; opposition to binding military alliances; and the shunning of collective security. Above all, the isolationist seeks to preserve American autonomy, the freedom to act politically and economically unrestrained by mandatory commitments to other nations. Such people often differ from pacifists, broadly defined as opponents to war or violence and strictly defined since World War I as those who reject participation in any war. In contrast, isolationists often favored unilateral military action as part of exercising the "free hand." Indeed, an isolationist could be—and many were—intensely expansionist, supporting military preparations, backing certain forms of imperialism, and engaging in outright war in Latin America or in the Pacific. Furthermore, most isolationists did not seek to avoid commercial agreements, much less to isolate the United States from the world's culture.

Though the concept is rooted in the very founding of the United States, the term "isolationist" came into vogue during the mid-1930s, when Congress passed a series of neutrality acts designed to seal it off from overseas conflicts. Historian John Milton Cooper Jr. accurately notes that the word "isolationism" remains loaded with emotional connotations that present barriers to any analysis.[1] Another scholar, David Hastings Dunn, found the term "much abused and yet little defined and properly understood," a concept "methodologically problematical because it is used promiscuously by many parties in the debate to castigate their opponents."[2]

From the start, the word bore negative connotations, with critics portraying isolationists as at best irresponsibly naive, at worst conscious instruments of America's enemies. As noted by scholar Brooke L. Blower, during World War II critics and policymakers "invented" the term so as to declare it "bankrupt," a value system to be "spurned" in

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hindsight as “America’s greatest mistake.”[3] In the heated days of the conflict, interventionists often described “isolationists” as at best exhibiting a dangerous naiveté, at worst lunatics, anti-Semites, and Nazi sympathizers.

Proponents of the position usually reject the label, correctly finding it unfairly derogatory. As most opposed isolating the United States from foreign contact, they long preferred such terms as “neutralist” and “nationalist.” In 1940 historian Charles A. Beard called himself a “continentalist.”[4] That same year Senator Arthur H. Vandenberg sought the term “insulationist.”[5] The *Chicago Tribune* used the noun “nationalist.” Of contemporary foes of intervention, the *New York Daily News* alone wore the label with pride.

Only a small minority of scholars, however, have been reluctant to give up this word. In such works as the *Tragedy of American Diplomacy* (1952; new enlarged, 1962), William Appleman Williams scrapped the term, particularly as applied to the 1920s.[6] Beginning with his study of the America First Committee, Justus D. Doenecke preferred the appellation “anti-interventionist” but in this article heuristically uses both words interchangeably.[7] Walter A. McDougall substituted the word “unilateralist.”[8] Blower suggested that for the years 1919–1941, “neutrality” is a far more accurate description.[9]

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From the Birth of the United States to World War I

From 1787, when George Washington took the oath of office, through the early 20th century, the nation has usually pursued a classic isolationist foreign policy. Thomas Paine's *Common Sense* (1776) early articulated this stance, maintaining that "As Europe is our market for trade, we ought to form no partial connection with any part of it. It is the true interest of America to steer clear of European contentions."[10] George Washington's Farewell Address of 1796 urged Americans to "steer clear of permanent alliances," for "Europe has a set of primary interests which to us have none or a very remote relation."[11] In his first inaugural address, Thomas Jefferson endorsed "peace, commerce and honest friendship with all nations, entangling alliances with none."[12] On July 4, 1821, Secretary of State John Quincy Adams declared that the United States was "the well-wisher to the freedom and independence of all" but "goes not abroad, in search of monsters to destroy."[13] In 1823, in his annual message, President James Monroe proclaimed his famous doctrine, which included the words "In the wars of the European powers in matters relating to themselves we have never taken part, nor does it comport with our policy to do so."[14]

At the same time, from its founding the United States entered into economic agreements, beginning with France in 1778. During the early 19th century, it encouraged Latin American revolts against Spain, contested the Oregon Territory with Britain, and empathized with the European revolutions of 1830 and 1848. In order to protect American commerce, Jefferson sent marines to Tripoli and acquired the Louisiana Territory so as to keep the mouth of the Mississippi open to American trade. More important, the United States fought several major conflicts, including wars with Great Britain in 1812, with Mexico in 1846, and with Spain in 1898. As all such engagements were unilateral decisions, they never violated the classic isolationism espoused in the 18th century. By the end of the century, the United States had acquired Hawaii, Puerto Rico, and the Philippines. Theodore Roosevelt's corollary to the Monroe Doctrine (1904) gave sanction over the next twenty years for the United States to send troops to Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Nicaragua, Haiti, and Mexico. The administration of President William Howard Taft focused on "dollar diplomacy," replacing military occupation of debt-ridden nations (e.g., Central America) with customs receiverships, financial advisers, and fiscal reform.

All such activity did not manifest the behavior of an isolated nation but one pursuing international interests, especially economic advantage and trade, without making long-term commitments or formal alliances. Just three months before the outbreak of World War I, President Woodrow Wilson insisted that "we need not and we should not form alliances with any nation in the world."[15] Even in 1917, when the United States entered

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World War I, it did so as an “associated power” and not as a full-scale partner of the Allies, so as to avoid any obligations that might come from a binding military alliance.

World War I and the League of Nations

When World War I broke out, isolationists sought to restrict U.S. financial and commercial ties to the Allies, who dominated the seas. Their ranks included Socialists, reformers, German and Irish Americans, such manufacturers as Henry Ford, and such publishers as William Randolph Hearst. A variety of legislators, including Robert M. La Follette (R-WI) and Claude Kitchin (D-NC), came from still largely rural states in the Middle West, the Great Plains, and to a lesser degree the South. Beginning in August 1914, these anti-interventionists opposed loans to belligerents, as this lending gave the United States a financial interest in the military victory of the recipients. They advocated a non-discriminatory arms embargo, for they claimed that the weapons trade simply prolonged the conflict while contributing to the overseas carnage. When in December 1915 Wilson endorsed a “preparedness” agenda involving an expanded army and a five-year program for the navy, critics countered by accusing the president of needlessly militarizing the nation, bleeding the American taxpayer, falling prey to needless war scares, and serving the interests of big business, especially munitions makers. After German U-boats sank the British passengers ship *Lusitania* in May 1915 and *Arabic* that August, Wilson’s critics in February 1916 backed legislation introduced by Senator Thomas W. Gore (D-OK) and Representative Jeff McLemore (D-TX) that requested the president advise American citizens against traveling on belligerent ships. Secretary of State William Jennings Bryan had earlier resigned over this matter.

When Wilson announced the severance of diplomatic relations with Germany on February 3, 1917, doing so in light of Berlin’s declaration of unrestricted submarine warfare, the president’s opponents accused the chief executive of risking war to defend American commerce on the high seas. After German U-boats sank several American merchant ships, Wilson asked Congress for authorization to arm such craft. A small group of senators (whom Wilson called “a little group of willful men”) filibustered, temporarily blocking this move. La Follette spoke for many anti-interventionists in calling the legislation biased and unconstitutional; it bestowed dangerous powers upon the president. When continued sinkings and news that Germany sought a military alliance with Mexico led Wilson to ask for a declaration of war on April 2, six senators and fifty representatives refused to back the chief executive. They claimed that the nation was ill prepared for battle, that the public had been given no chances to express its views directly, and that the Allies sought imperialistic goals. Senator George Norris (R-NE) saw a war declaration as serving only Wall Street, which wanted “to put the dollar sign on the American flag.”[16]

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After the Great War ended, President Wilson sought Senate ratification of the Versailles Treaty in 1919, and with it the all-important Covenant of the League of Nations. The foreign policy consensus defined by Washington and Jefferson had obviously broken down, for the United States was suddenly involved in more than territorial and commercial expansion. It had just served as a major belligerent in a conflict that spanned several continents and was one of the “Big Four” at the ensuing Paris peace conference. Only then did “isolationism” emerge as a distinctive position, as for the first time the United States was forced to debate assumptions hitherto taken for granted.

A major shift was taking place. Those isolationists who opposed collective security no longer embodied an almost universal consensus but became just one distinct element among others in American politics. Even during the “isolationist” decades of the 1920s and 1930s, which involved the abandoning of any effort to make “the world safe for democracy,” these opponents had to share the public square with adherents to Wilson’s internationalist vision of global interdependence. What had originated as a fundamental policy principle now became a faction, although until 1941 an extremely powerful one. The broad tradition of “isolationism” was becoming limited to a group of people soon branded as “isolationists.”

Isolationism remained persuasive for several key reasons. The first was geographical. The United States has always enjoyed security to a degree unparalleled among modern nations. The Atlantic and Pacific oceans served as impregnable bulwarks against overseas aggression; the nations of the Western Hemisphere were too weak to engage in any attack. The second involved continental expansion. The sheer vastness of the North American continent offered such rich rewards that Americans inevitably focused upon developing their own empire. Once new markets were secured, they believed prosperity would be guaranteed.

A third factor involved America’s self-image of exceptionalism. From the time of Jefferson to that of President William McKinley, Americans had long been suspicious of a corrupt, quarrelsome, autocratic “Old World.” In contrast, they saw themselves embodying a virtuous, pristine republic uncontaminated by urban depravity, artificial effeteness, exploitative imperialism, and revolutionary barbarism.

By the 1920s, anti-interventionism was particularly strong among German-Americans embittered over the Versailles Treaty, Irish-Americans furious over British treatment of their beloved *Eire*, and Italian-Americans disappointed over their former homeland’s new boundaries. Bitter against Wilson, these ethnic groups disproportionately opposed any internationalist approach to world affairs.

The League faced three distinct groups of senatorial opponents. First were the “Irreconcilables,” an extremely disparate lot of sixteen distinct individuals, united only by the desire to reject membership in any form. As historian Ralph Stone notes, the Irreconcilables in turn can be subdivided into three singular entities. Some senators, such as William E. Borah (R-ID), Hiram Johnson (R-CA), and James A. Reed (D-MO), possessed a “fundamentalist” attitude toward the advice given by the Founders, adhering to the

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simple creed that the United States must alone determine its destiny. Others, such as Miles Poindexter (R-WA), tended to be conservative, imperialistic, and “realistic,” believing that only military power could resolve international problems. Several, among them Philander Knox (R-PA), accepted limited obligations to the wartime Allies. Still others, including La Follette and Norris, expressed sympathy toward international disarmament and arbitration. Such variety among the “Irreconcilables” found counterparts outside the Senate amid such diverse organs as Oswald Garrison Villard’s *Nation*, Herbert Croly’s *New Republic*, the newspaper chain of William Randolph Hearst, and George Harvey’s *Weekly*.

A second group consisted of “mild reservationists,” led by Senators Irvine L. Lenroot (R-WI) and Frank B. Kellogg (R-MN). They sought to exclude domestic affairs and the Monroe Doctrine from the League Covenant, guarantee the right to withdraw from the League, and exercise the option of ignoring the Covenant’s Article X, which pledged member nations “to respect and preserve as against external aggression the territorial integrity and existing political independence of the League.” Former New York governor Charles Evans Hughes and ex-president William Howard Taft also adhered to this position.

Senator Henry Cabot Lodge (R-MA) led the third body, the “strong” reservationists, supported by former secretary of state Elihu Root. This group not only wanted to amend outright parts of the treaty but insisted that the signatories formally accept these changes. Lodge called the League a “deformed experiment” that could result only in “everlasting meddling and muddling in every respect.”[17]

In November 1919 and March 1920, after one League proposal after another was defeated, the Senate turned down American entry into the newly formed body. Wilson himself was less internationalist than might appear; as historian Lloyd E. Ambrosius argues, “The president retained an instinctive isolationist aversion to involvement in the politics of the Old World.”[18] In an exchange on August 19, 1919, with the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, the chief executive stressed that at Paris “it certainly was our endeavor to keep free from European affairs.”[19] Secretary of State Robert Lansing went further, writing in his 1921 memoir that Article X created a “de facto coalition of the Great Powers,” thereby perpetuating Old World diplomacy and denying the equality of nations.[20] Ironically, however, a clear majority of senators favored joining the League in some form while differing among themselves as to the conditions of League membership. Only the “Irreconcilables” opposed the treaty in full. Furthermore, much of the press backed League entry.

League entry would obviously have modified the American isolationist tradition. Isolationists strongly attacked it for obligating the U.S. to enforce an international status quo. Legally, however, it only obligated member states to assess any instance of apparent aggression; they were obligated neither to conclude that such aggression actually existed nor to respond with armed force. Each member of the League Council could decide for

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itself what action it would undertake; a unanimous vote was needed for any operation. In the drafting of the League charter, Wilson insisted that exercise of force stayed entirely optional for each member nation.

The 1920s and 1930s

During the 1920s and early 1930s, the United States cooperated with other nations but made no commitments. It pursued international naval disarmament, stabilization of power relations in the Pacific, the outlawry of war, a quest for markets in East Asia, repudiation of the Roosevelt corollary, retrenchment in Latin America, and non-recognition of Japan's conquest of Manchuria. Through the efforts of banker Charles G. Dawes in 1924 and financier Owen D. Young in 1929, the United States sought to settle the knotty issue of German reparations. Even more significantly, its loans and commerce underwrote much international prosperity.

At this time, certain senatorial isolationists, rooted in the Great Plains and the Far West, became the first bloc of congressional dissenters to articulate a truly global ideology, one that differed from Wilsonianism by denying that American-style democracy best fitted Latin American and East Asian nations. Rather they wanted the United States to encourage nationalist elements in underdeveloped lands, maintaining that a world of autonomous states would best preserve a peaceful world order. Such "peace progressives," as historian Robert Bruce Johnson has called them, included Senators Borah, Johnson, La Follette, Norris, John Blaine (R-WI), Henrik Shipstead (Farmer-Labor-MN), and Burton K. Wheeler (D-MT). These figures opposed oil diplomacy in Mexico and U.S. occupation of Nicaragua and Haiti while favoring radical disarmament, Chinese nationalism, the peace movement, and economic assistance to Germany. By the 1930s, their isolationism had taken a more nationalistic tone, as they sought above all insulation from the budding great power conflicts triggered by the rising powers of Germany, Italy, and Japan.

Initially, the advent of Franklin D. Roosevelt to the presidency in 1933 made little difference. That summer FDR "torpedoed" the London Economic Conference, an effort to stabilize world currencies. In 1934, at the prompting of Hiram Johnson, Congress unanimously forbade private loans to defaulting nations. A year later, due to congressional hostility, presidential ineptitude, and demagogic propaganda promulgated by Hearst and radio priest Charles E. Coughlin, the United States rejected membership in the World Court. From 1934 to 1936, Senator Gerald P. Nye (R-ND) chaired the Special Senate Committee Investigating the Munitions Industry, popularly called the "Nye Committee." Primarily composed of isolationists,[21] the committee presented strong evidence in 1915–1917 that loans from the banking firm of J. P. Morgan and Company and arms from such companies as E. I. Du Pont de Nemours to the Allies naturally aroused German hostility, leading inevitably to American participation in World War I.

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From 1935 to 1937, Congress passed a series of bills called the neutrality acts. Included was legislation imposing an arms embargo on belligerents once the president declared that a state of war existed, prohibiting loans and credits to such nations, and forbidding Americans from traveling on ships belonging to them. The 1937 law outlawed the arming of all merchant ships trading with belligerents and gave the president discretionary authority to sell non-embargoed goods on a "cash and carry basis," by which belligerents would pay for shipments at time of purchase and transport all goods in their own vessels.

Isolationists were divided on commercial matters. Historian Manfred Jonas notes that a small "belligerent" element—represented by such figures as Senators Johnson and Borah and Representatives Hamilton Fish (R- NY) and Edith Nourse Rogers (R-MA)— stressed maritime rights under traditional international law and the absolute right to trade anywhere on the globe. Hence, they disliked the neutrality acts as compromising unhindered world trade. This group received articulate support from jurist John Bassett Moore and Professor Edwin Borchard of Yale University Law School, whose work *Neutrality for the United States* (1937; rev. ed., 1940) argued that Wilson and Lansing, by refusing to insist upon traditional neutral rights, had made war with Germany inevitable. Conversely, Jonas has discovered a larger more "timid" group—exemplified by such legislators as Senators Nye and Arthur H. Vandenberg (R-MI)—who were willing to sacrifice some foreign commerce, a view embodied in the neutrality acts.[22]

During this time, Wilson's intellectual critics, aptly called "revisionists," exercised much influence on the public. Journalist C. Hartley Grattan's *Why We Fought* (1929) found economic forces leading the United States into the Great War. In his *Road to War, 1914–1917* (1935), Walter Millis, editorial writer for the *New York Herald Tribune*, discerned the United States stumbling into the conflict. Historian Charles A. Beard's *The Devil Theory of War* (1936) blamed an export-conscious American public for making intervention inevitable. In 1938, another professional scholar, Charles Callan Tansill, published *America Goes to War*, which portrayed a peace-loving Wilson unable to restrain his own pro-Entente administration. As late as January 1937, opinion polls indicated that 70 percent of Americans considered participation in the First World War a mistake.

Already, however, such isolationism was in retreat. In January 1938, the House rejected by 209-188 a constitutional amendment, introduced by Representative Louis Ludlow (D-IN), that would restrict Congress's power to declare war. If the amendment had passed, Congress would have been able to act only in cases of actual or imminent invasion of the United States or its territories or attack by a non-American nation on a state in the Western Hemisphere. Otherwise, the amendment would have required a national referendum on whether Americans wished to enter a conflict.

World War II

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Once Hitler invaded Poland on September 1, 1939, anti-interventionists were on the defensive, losing every major legislative battle over the next two years. In November 1939, they unsuccessfully fought repeal of the arms embargo. A new law permitted belligerents to purchase munitions by means of “cash and carry,” a practice that obviously favored maritime-based Britain over land-based Germany. Isolationists claimed that the bill would drain the nation of essential munitions, lead to an artificial economic boom followed by bust, taint Americans with “blood money,” and expose the United States to reprisal, including possible sabotage against its factories. Most important of all, it would inevitably result in outright entry into the conflict, an argument intensified with each new administration proposal. At this time, however, it was widely believed that Germany would be unable to conquer Western Europe, an attitude that remained until the fall of the low countries and France in the spring of 1940. When Congress adopted military conscription in September 1940, opponents argued that the legislation bypassed an untried volunteer system, arbitrarily disrupted the lives of many young males, and violated elementary civil liberties. Draftees, they claimed, lacked essential training rifles and tanks while Hitler’s *Blitzkrieg* tactics had made mass armies obsolete. Moreover, as Germany was showing itself unable to cross the English Channel, the idea of any transatlantic invasion fleet seemed ludicrous.

The lend-lease bill, passed in March 1941, prompted an even more intense debate because it authorized the president to provide military articles and information to any nation whose defense he deemed vital to U.S. security. Critics claimed that the law would bankrupt the nation, weaken American defenses, give the president power to enter into undeclared wars, and provoke the Germans. That August, when Congress passed legislation lifting the one-year term for draftees, isolationists called the bill unnecessary, claiming that the existing army of close to four and a half million men was sufficient. They accused the government of breaking faith with the conscripts, who assumed that they would just serve twelve months, and asserted that Hitler’s invasion of Russia took the immediate pressure off Britain, thereby in turn making the United States safer.

In November 1941 Congress specifically repealed “cash-and-carry” by authorizing the arming of American merchant vessels and permitting them to carry cargoes to belligerent ports. Foes feared that placing guns on merchant ships offered little real protection, particularly against U-boats and aircraft. Other arguments concerned violations of international law and de facto entry into the war.

Isolationists also opposed commitments made by Roosevelt on his own authority. When in September 1940 FDR traded fifty destroyers, deeming them overage, for ninety-nine-year leases on British-owned naval and air bases in Newfoundland and the Caribbean, anti-interventionists claimed that the president had exceeded his constitutional powers and had given away valuable craft. The chief executive’s occupation of Greenland (April 1941) and Iceland (July 1941) met with similar anxieties concerning abuse of presidential power and warlike behavior. Isolationists saw the joint Roosevelt-Churchill declaration of August

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1941, called the Atlantic Charter, as either too dangerous, possibly hiding secret commitments, or too idealistic to be workable.

The more militant isolationists leaned toward rigid forms of neutrality. These included Senators Nye, Wheeler, Bennett Champ Clark (D-MO), and Arthur W. Vandenberg (R-MI); aviator Charles Lindbergh; publishers Hearst and Robert R. McCormick of the *Chicago Tribune*; and elitist theorist Lawrence Dennis. More moderate isolationists would permit "cash and carry" and extensive loans, seeking to aid Britain provided war was not risked. Such figures included former president Herbert Hoover; Sears, Roebuck executive Robert E. Wood; Senator Robert A. Taft (R-OH); Representative Hamilton Fish; and former Kansas governor Alfred M. Landon (R). Congressional bases for both groups lay solidly in the Middle West and Great Plains states; many anti-FDR legislators were Republicans who assumed conservative positions on domestic policy.

Anti-interventionists could take little comfort from many public opinion polls. According to Gallup surveys, 62 percent supported cash and carry, 60 percent favored the destroyer transfer, and 66 percent endorsed conscription. 61 percent backed lend-lease and the occupation of Iceland, and, in May 1941, 76 percent indicated that the United States should continue to supply England at the risk of war. The extension of term limits for draftees showed a genuine split, with 51 percent favoring the elimination of the one-year term. On October 17, Gallup indicated 72 percent favored arming merchant ships across the Atlantic, while only 46 percent endorsed their entry into combat zones. In early November 1941, a similar split existed over sending an American Expeditionary Force if this was necessary to defeat Germany, with 47 percent in favor and 46 percent opposed.

A number of groups battled against intervention, including the quasi-pacifist National Council for the Prevention of War, launched in 1921 to coordinate disarmament sentiment, and the No Foreign War Committee, headed by Iowa editor Verne Marshall and lasting only from December 1940 to April 1941. The Keep America Out of War Congress (KAOWC), founded in 1938, coordinated several pacifist groups and the Socialist party, with the latter becoming increasingly strong within its ranks.

But none of these bodies could compare to the America First Committee (AFC), formed in September 1940 as a clearinghouse for research, lectures, and radio broadcasts. Founded by Yale law student R. Douglas Stuart Jr. and chaired by General Robert E. Wood, it included in its ranks such figures as Lindbergh, retired diplomat William R. Castle, former New Deal administrator General Hugh Johnson, and advertising executive Chester Bowles. Lindbergh, financial writer John T. Flynn, Socialist leader Norman Thomas, Senators Nye and Wheeler, and Congressman Fish addressed huge AFC rallies. At its peak the AFC possessed 450 chapters, a membership of 850,000, and an income of $370,000 donated by 25,000 contributors. Although unable to defeat any of Roosevelt's legislation, it undoubtedly caused FDR to be more cautious on such matters as extending the terms of draftees and convoying British vessels. Certain congressional votes were quite close: a one-vote margin in the House on extending terms of draftees and a twenty-

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vote House margin on granting American merchant ships permission to enter combat zones that had been prohibited in the 1939 “cash and carry legislation.”[23]

The committee suffered a severe blow in September 1941 when Lindbergh, while expressing sympathy for those Jews experiencing persecution, accused American Jews, as a group, of exercising undue influence in the media and government. In 1938, when the Nazis sharply accelerated persecution of Jews, polls had indicated that up to 85 percent of Americans opposed increasing refugee quotas, and surveys spanning 1938–1941 showed that between one-third and one-half of the public believed that Jews exercised too much power in the nation. Yet condemnation of the aviator’s speech was well-nigh universal, with several prominent members of the AFC’s national committee resigning in protest.

Certain books advanced the isolationist doctrine. Charles A. Beard’s *Giddy Minds and Foreign Quarrels* (1939) and *A Foreign Policy for Americans* (1940) warned against colonialism, “navalism,” and the quixotic quest for massive overseas markets. Anne Morrow Lindbergh’s *The Wave of the Future: A Confession of Faith* (1940) maintained that democracy, liberty, indeed civilization itself could only be preserved by avoiding crusades overseas. Lawrence Dennis’s *The Dynamics of War and Revolution* (1940) found efforts to hinder Germany’s natural expansion both futile and dangerous. General Motors executive Graeme Howard’s *America and a New World Order* (1940) sought the economic division of the world into six blocs. Fleming McLiesh and Cushman Reynolds, contributors to the liberal weekly *Common Sense*, penned *Strategy of the Americas* (1941), while military columnist Hanson Baldwin wrote *United We Stand: Defense of the Western Hemisphere* (1941). Both works found isolation feasible provided the United States built a series of impregnable bases stretching from the coast of northern Canada to Brazil.

Although several leading isolationists endorsed conscription for hemispheric defense, many more argued that a new American Expeditionary Force would simply prolong the struggle overseas and cost over a million U.S. lives. The great bulk of anti-interventionists frequently coupled their foreign policy sentiments with condemnation of Germany and Nazism and praise for Great Britain. At the same time, they often desired negotiation between England and Germany, fearing above all Soviet domination of Europe. Many opposed direct confrontation with Japan, finding no threat from that nation, and argued that the United States should not be propping up Western imperialism in Southeast Asia. Anti-interventionists differed among themselves as to efficacy of large naval fleets, but united in stressing air power, which, they claimed, was the most cost-effective way of defending the United States. They maintained that no foreign power was able to conduct continuous bombardment of the nation, for the United States could easily pick off any attacking planes.

The Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, brought the complete collapse of classic isolationism. The AFC promptly disbanded, and the KAOWC

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transformed itself into the Post War World Council, in reality a platform for Norman Thomas, who stressed postwar disarmament and international conciliation.

The Cold War and After

During the Cold War, isolationists, though still strong in the Middle West and Great Plains states, met with continual failure. No longer would the United States take a neutralist position in world affairs or avoid confronting totalitarian power blocks. By 1947 the nation had veered from some forceful but minority isolationist sentiment in the late 1930s to strongly oppose the Soviet Union as a world power or Communism as an international ideology. Over the years America would fight in Korea, Vietnam, Iraq, and Afghanistan on a major scale, initially with little domestic dissent.

Furthermore, historian Ted Galen Carpenter argues that the “new isolationists,” as they were called, were divided into three categories. “Doctrinaire isolationists” maintained an absolutist position. Believing that the United States could have avoided involvement in both world wars if American leaders had kept a non-interventionist course, they desired to maintain a unilateral and cautious approach. If the nation continued its global entanglements, they predicted, imperialism, bankruptcy, dictatorship, and perpetual war lay ahead. Though speaking for at most 20 percent of the public, they listed in their ranks such figures as publisher Robert R. McCormick; historian Harry Elmer Barnes; commentators John T. Flynn, Lawrence Dennis, Merwin K. Hart, and Samuel Pettengill; business leaders Bruce Barton, Sterling Morton, and Ernest T. Weir; Senators Burton Wheeler, Hiram Johnson, and Henrik Shipstead, and William Langer (R-ND); and Representatives William Lemke (R-ND), Usher Burdick (R-ND), Frederick C. Smith (R-OH), and Clare Hoffman (R-MI).

“Pragmatic isolationists” were willing to acknowledge that changed circumstances limited the ability for unilateral action. These resigned skeptics probed weaknesses in the interventionist cause. They sought a “middle way” that would modify such institutions as the United Nations (UN), the Marshall Plan, and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). Usually conservative Republicans, they included Senators Taft, Kenneth Wherry (R-NE), and Arthur Watkins (R-UT); Congressmen Lawrence Smith (R-WI) and Daniel Reed (NY); *Chicago Tribune* columnist Walter Trohan; and industrialist Ernest T. Weir.

Carpenter identifies a third group as “marginal isolationists,” who accepted foreign economic aid and some political entanglements but opposed arms shipments and military alliances. Examples include ex-president Hoover, Senators John Bricker (R-OH) and Forrest Donnell (R-MO), and Representative John Taber (R-NY). Although quite vocal, the three elements lacked the organization and internal cohesion needed for effective opposition.

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date: 16 April 2018

In 1945 the United States became a charter member of the United Nations. Because it could exercise a veto on its powerful Security Council, many fears were assuaged and only two senators, Shipstead and Langer, voted against membership. Yet the tally was somewhat deceptive, for several anti-interventionists voiced anxieties that the Security Council might free the international status quo and commit American troops to an international police force. Alternatives included increasing the power of the UN's General Assembly, greater regional organization, and codification of human rights.

When President Harry Truman addressed Congress in March 1947, he stressed that American policy must "support free peoples who are resisting attempted subjugation by armed authorities or by outside pressures."[24] More specifically, he sought a $400 million appropriation to save Greece and Turkey from Communism. Isolationists argued that Truman's language was far too sweeping, extending possible U.S. commitments to the entire world and in the process risking war with the Soviet Union. Crises in the Eastern Mediterranean, they claimed, were manufactured and could lead to an American version of imperialism. They found Greece a corrupt monarchy, Turkey a dictatorial despotism. Better to refer the Greco-Turkish matter to the United Nations and delete military aid from Turkey. However, Congress paid little heed to such critics and passed the aid bill by decisive margins.

In June 1948 Congress passed the first major Marshall Plan bill. Isolationists were again defeated. The recent Communist coup d'état in Czechoslovakia and a Soviet defense treaty with Finland helped secure adoption of the $4.3 billion package plus an increase of $1 billion in export-import bank loans. In opposing the bill, anti-interventionists feared national bankruptcy. They saw such aid as counterproductive, not containing Communism so much as sustaining Socialist regimes on the European continent. The Czech crisis, they claimed, was artificially manufactured, for that nation had been in the Soviet sphere of influence since World War II. Options included granting outright charity, returning to "Fortress America," concentrating on domestic subversion, and spending the relief funds to eliminate domestic poverty. Moderate isolationists proposed to modify, not reject, the administration proposal, with Taft and Hoover seeking tighter fiscal controls.

The greatest challenge to Cold War isolationism came in July 1949, when the Senate, by a vote of 82 to 13, ratified the Atlantic Pact, which established the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. The pact was the first binding military agreement since the French alliance of 1778 and pledged the nations that signed to treat "an armed attack against one or more of them in Europe or North America an attack on them all."[25] By now, criticism was somewhat familiar. To anti-interventionists, the commitment overextended American resources, linked the United States to European colonialism, needlessly provoked the Soviet Union, and weakened the United Nations. Most important of all, it violated the Constitution by placing the nation's fate in the hands of others, for the United States was sacrificing the "free hand" that it had jealously guarded for so long. Isolationists, particularly those vocal before Pearl Harbor, now found it far preferable to adopt psychological warfare, encourage domestic rebellion behind the Iron Curtain, and

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date: 16 April 2018

concentrate on Asia, where Communist advances appeared far more threatening. In *Wings for Peace* (1953), General Bonner Fellers posited a military alternative to NATO, victory over the Soviet Union through air power.

As in the case of World War I, revisionist writers sought to discredit American participation in the second global conflict, going so far as to indict Franklin Roosevelt for manipulating the nation into the hostilities and arguing that FDR's foes had the correct foreign policy. *Chicago Tribune* staffer George Morgenstern's *Pearl Harbor: The Story of the Secret War* (1947) argued that the administration had deliberately withheld knowledge of impending attack from American commanders in Hawaii. Charles A. Beard's *American Foreign Policy in the Making, 1932–1940* (1947) and *President Roosevelt and the Coming of the War, 1941* (1948) accused the chief executive of being duplicitous regarding both Europe and Asia, endangering his nation in the process. In *America's Second Crusade* (1950), journalist and historian William Henry Chamberlin included wartime diplomacy in his scathing indictment. Charles Callan Tansill's *Back Door to War: The Roosevelt Foreign Policy, 1931–1941* (1952) revealed his book's thesis in the first sentence: "The main objective in American foreign police since 1900 has been the preservation of the British Empire."[26] In 1953 Harry Elmer Barnes edited an entire anthology of revisionist writers, a volume that—in Barnes's words—would convert Americans from "global meddling" to "a sane foreign policy, based on continentalism, national interest, ideological coexistence, international urbanity, and rational co-operation in world affairs."[27]

When the Korean War broke out in June 1950, leading the United States to fight under United Nations auspices, many isolationists initially opposed intervention. Arguments varied. Truman had acted unconstitutionally by ignoring Congress before ordering troops. He was playing into the hands of Stalin by overcommitting the United States. The United Nations was bound to hinder American action. The administration would use the crisis to impose "socialistic" controls on the economy.

In late October, Communist Chinese forces entered the conflict, confronting UN forces with possible defeat and prompting the "Great Debate" of 1950–1951. That December financier Joseph P. Kennedy found commitments to Berlin and Korea unwise and claimed indifference to temporary Communist domination of Europe. Like Kennedy, Herbert Hoover, speaking the same month, called for retreat to "this Gibraltar of Western civilization," though he did advocate holding such "island nations" as Japan, Taiwan, the Philippines, and Great Britain (if it so desired).[28]

By 1951, however, many isolationists sought vigorous military action. They were already claiming that the "loss" of Eastern Europe and China had resulted from "twenty years of treason." Such individuals—including Taft and Hoover—combined a genuine belief in a wide-ranging Soviet conspiracy that reached the State and Defense Department with the partisan desire to regain Congress and the White House for the Republican party. When in April Truman fired General Douglas MacArthur for publicly demanding intensive escalation of the Korean effort, including the bombing of installations within China itself,

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date: 16 April 2018

the great bulk of isolationists backed the general's proposals. In a book written for his upcoming presidential campaign, *A Foreign Policy for Americans* (1951), Ohio Senator Robert Taft stressed an alliance with England, the temporary arming of Western Europe, an all-powerful air deterrent, MacArthur's Asian strategy, and massive propaganda and espionage behind the iron curtain. Writes historian Jonas, "The new isolationism was in reality no isolationism at all. It was, in fact, little more than an emotional outburst of some of the old isolationists, who were trying—and failing—to come to grips with the modern world."[29]

Taft's presidential bid failed in 1952, as had his lesser efforts in 1940 and 1948. General Dwight W. Eisenhower, who sought no escalation of the Korean War, entered the White House. In 1953 and 1954, Senator Bricker proposed a constitutional amendment limiting executive treaty-making power, but it met with the president's opposition and was defeated in the Senate. After the Viet Minh defeated the French at Dien Bien Phu in May 1954, certain administration leaders considered American involvement in Indochina. But most veteran isolationists opposed the move, claiming that the United States would be taking the wrong side of an anti-imperialist struggle and that Southeast Asia was not vital to American security. Despite such caution, isolationism had fundamentally changed its nature. Though still suspicious of commitments to Europe, even balking at Marshall Plan aid, "isolationists" increasingly advocated a hawkish stance concerning Korea and China that could be absolutely reckless. Though isolationism from 1919 through 1941 drew substantial support from both parties, that of the Cold War era possessed far more of a purely Republican base, for whom embarrassing Democratic foreign policy took precedence over ideological consistency.[30]

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date: 16 April 2018

From Vietnam to Afghanistan

The Vietnam War, which spanned the mid-1960s to 1975, drew a variety of protests, spanning from a disaffected youth burning draft cards and demonstrating in the streets to bastions of the political establishment attacking what Senator J. William Fulbright (D-AR) termed “the arrogance of power.” As with isolationists ranging from World War I to the early Cold War, critics emphasized domestic priorities, opposed unrestricted presidential power, and denied that the specific foe, in this case the Viet Cong, threatened the nation’s security. New Left opponents of the conflict implicitly sought total United States “isolation,” often positing a more innocent Third World needing to free itself from a predatory America. More mainstream opponents vehemently denied kinship with any isolationist tradition, pointing with pride to their support of World War II intervention, containment of the Soviet Union, the NATO alliance, the United Nations, economic aid, and international arms limitation.

As the Vietnam conflict became increasingly mired in stalemate, polls shifted from 71 percent of the population backing the war in December 1965 to three-fourths seeking total withdrawal by November 1971. By June 1974 only 48 percent of those polled favored using American military forces to rescue Western Europe. In 1973 Congress enacted the War Powers Act, which committed the president to consult with Congress before introducing armed forces into hostilities, report any such deployments to Congress within forty-eight hours, and remove any such troops within sixty days if Congress refused to endorse the president’s action. Several scholars went beyond admonitions of caution, with Robert W. Tucker in 1972 advocating “a new isolationism” that embodied economic self-sufficiency and the scrapping of collective security.[31]

Although the Cold War formally ended in November 1989, the expected “peace dividend,” in the form of radically reduced military budgets, did not occur. In January 1991, President George W. Bush launched Operation Desert Storm, removing the troops of Iraq’s dictator Saddam Hussen from Kuwait; the “hundred hour campaign” was extremely popular. Bush received his peak approval of 89 percent, which was the highest presidential rating in history. When in April 1999 President William Jefferson Clinton authorized U.S. participation in the NATO bombing of Serbia to rescue independent Kosovo, Gallup reported 61 percent approval.

Foreign policy played little role in the 1992 and 1996 presidential campaigns, polls revealing more support for restraining an aggressor than for imposing internal political change. Anti-interventionism found a voice in the Republican primary campaigns of rightist columnist Pat Buchanan, who in 1996 drew 3.1 million votes before dropping out of the race. An unabashed critic of Britain’s decision to declare war against Germany in 1939 and an admirer of Charles A. Lindbergh, Buchanan wrote a series of books defending American’s tradition of isolationism and opposing Middle East involvements

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date: 16 April 2018

and foreign penetration of domestic markets.[32] In 1992 and 1996, Texas entrepreneur Ross Perot ran for president as an independent, making his opposition to the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) a vital part of his platform; he received 18.9 percent of the popular vote in 1992 and 8 percent of the popular vote in 1996.

During the 1990s several international-relations experts sought radical non-involvement. In 1995 Eric Nordlinger's *Isolationism Reconfigured: American Foreign Policy for a New Century* saw in such anti-interventionism "the strategic vision of quiet strength and national autonomy" as he called for a defense perimeter limited to North America and Mexico.[33] Two years later Walter A. McDougall contributed *Promised Land, Crusader State*, which contrasted the wisdom of America's "unilateralist" tradition of 1776 to 1898 with a dangerous messianism that succeeded it.

In 2000, when Texas governor George W. Bush (R) ran for president, he advised caution, disdaining humanitarian military interventions and "nation-building." Yet within two years after the 9/11 attack of 2001, the United States invaded Iraq in March 2003. Initially the engagement drew popular support. By spring 2004, however, insurgent opposition became lethal. Three out of four expressed pessimism concerning the conflict, and 40 percent asserted that the United States should never have entered the conflict. In 2009 the Democratic presidential candidate, Illinois senator Barack Obama, gained the White House in significant part on his promise to withdraw troops from Iraq. As a result of the Iraq War and frustration with a faltering conflict in Afghanistan, in 2004 the Pew Research Center found respondents maintaining 51 percent to 17 percent that the United States was doing too much in helping solve the world's problems.

Despite a foreign policy establishment that deplored any hints of isolationism, some scholars advocated strong retrenchment. These critics often described their position not as 'isolationist.' Rather they used such terms as "interest-based policies", "strategic disengagement," "strategic independence," and "national strategy." In 2003 a body of diverse scholars formed the Coalition for a Realistic Foreign Policy, a group opposed to the interventionism of the neo-conservatives and questioning both the morality and effectiveness of military pressure to achieve political and economic liberalization. In a series of books, political scientist Andrew J. Bacevich warned against American messianism, deploring military efforts to impose Western-style democracy upon Third World nations and citing Charles A. Beard and William Appleman Williams.[34] Similarly historian Joan Hoff (2008) attacked American exceptionalism and arrogant interventionism while a work by political scientist Barry R. Posen simply bears the title *Restraint*.[35] Remnants of traditional isolationism are found in such varied entities as the Cato Institute, the "paleoconservative" and libertarian movements, the writings of historian Ted Galen Carpenter, and the editorial staff of *Chronicles* magazine.

In 2008 and 2012, the libertarian Congressman Ron Paul (R-TX) made an abortive presidential bid; Paul opposed American membership in the United Nations and NATO and was the only candidate to have voted against the 2002 Iraq War Resolution. His son, Senator Rand Paul (R-KY), who entered the presidential race in 2016, opposed the Iraq

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date: 16 April 2018

War, intervention in Libya, and membership in the United Nations, and looked toward the ending of all foreign aid. The advent of Donald J. Trump to the presidency in 2017 could indicate a radical retrenchment of American commitments. Volatile and prone to self-contradiction, the Republican real estate mogul adopted the slogan "America First," preaching economic nationalism, threatening to ignore NATO obligations, disparaging the United Nations, and attacking "globalization."

Yet given the rise in global terrorism, quick delivery of nuclear weapons, and international economic interdependence, the isolationism that lasted from the Founders to the 1930s has long since vanished. The term will continue to be used polemically, however, to attack those who question varied American commitments outside the nation's physical borders.

Discussion of the Literature

For decades after 1941, most scholars were hostile to post–World War I isolationism, portraying its proponents as destructive impediments to the defeat of the Axis and the containment of Communism. Aside from the World War II revisionists, who were becoming an increasing minority within the historical profession, defenders of anti-interventionism were almost minuscule. Selig Adler's comprehensive work, *The Isolationist Impulse* (1957), expressed the prevailing attitude of post–World War II America, the very noun "impulse" connoting an irrational mindset.[36] In his 1967 study, *Isolationism in America, 1935–1941*, Manfred Jonas wrote, "The events at Pearl Harbor laid bare the untenability of the entire argument."[37] Even in the 21st century, such authors as Susan Dunn and Lynn Olsen find the isolationist position, particularly as reflected by Charles A. Lindbergh, severely flawed.[38]

By the 1950s, however, several historians began to recover certain aspects of isolationism. William Appleman Williams's highly influential *Tragedy of American Diplomacy* (enlarged 1962) contrasted the caution of Herbert Hoover to Franklin Roosevelt's "war for the American frontier." Williams found William E. Borah particularly trenchant in his opposition to United States expansion overseas.[39] Ralph Stone's 1970 study of the "Irreconcilables," which focuses on opponents of American entry into the League of Nations, saw many of their claims "irrelevant, irrational, and demagogic," but asserted that they correctly pointed out the League's "ambiguities, inconsistencies, and structural weaknesses."[40]

In a series of works covering successively the America First Committee (1953), the odysseys of Gerald P. Nye (1962) and Charles A. Lindbergh (1974), and the isolationist role during the entire Roosevelt administration (1983), Wayne S. Cole treats his subjects with almost clinical detachment. Cole's Lindbergh study, however, warns against closing the isolationist case prematurely, writing that the strategic issues the aviator raised thoughtful responses "that go beyond 'mere passion and prejudice'."[41] Somewhat similar

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date: 16 April 2018

to Cole is Justus D. Doenecke, whose series of studies, spanning two decades, treats Cold War isolationism (1979), the America First Committee (1990), and the Great Debate of 1939–1941 (2000). Throughout Doenecke finds the anti-interventionist record mixed, combining strategic naiveté and conspiratorial worldviews with a healthy suspicion of private power and alertness to presidential duplicity.[42] Robert David Johnson's 1995 study redefined certain leading isolationists of the 1920s as "peace progressives," senators who were more focused on opposing imperialism in the Third World than advocating blanket withdrawal from global involvements. Christopher McKnight Nichols's 2011 work, *Promise and Peril: America at the Dawn of a Global Age*, discusses an extremely pluralistic group of dissenters ranging from Henry Cabot Lodge to Socialist leader Eugene V. Debs. Nichols writes, "the isolationist tradition's inherent caution serves as a bulwark against hasty interventions and their likely unintended consequences."[43]

Before any new wave of scholarship emerges, certain tasks remain. For well over half a century, we have lacked a general history of 20th-century isolationism. The situation is somewhat surprising, for as far back as 1987 a guide to the literature offered over 1,500 entries spanning the outbreak of World War I through the early Cold War.[44] Because the great preponderance of congressional isolationists came from the Midwest and Great Plains states, urban anti-interventionism has been neglected. Similarly, though Anthony Gaughan has covered Wilson's purge of southern Democratic isolationists in 1918 and Cole offers reasons why the America First Committee remained weak in the South, the whole phenomena of the South's transformation to interventionism needs further study.[45] Cole stresses senators of a Western progressive heritage, but attention should be given to anti-interventionist members of the House, who represented small towns of the Middle West. This group was not only far greater in number but more likely to reflect "Main Street" tenets of fiscal conservatism, hard money, and opposition to trade unions and welfare legislation. While there have been many published biographies and dissertations of isolationists acting during World War I and its aftermath, a number of congressmen and senators have been overlooked.[46] Although such journalistic figures as William Randolph Hearst and the McCormick family have been exhaustively researched, a host of others need attention.[47] Turning to the interwar period, fruitful topics include the role of international law; anti-interventionist military doctrines, centering on "Fortress America"; and the campus press. Despite the plethora of monographs, articles, and doctoral theses, some vocal senators and representatives have almost totally been neglected.[48] The same holds true of certain anti-interventionist publishers, editors, cartoonists, and journalists.[49]

When it comes to the Cold War era, the need exists for a work on World War II revisionists. A good many isolationist legislators and journalists from the 1930s and World War II era remained active in the succeeding two decades. Yet new names can be added.[50] Far more work is needed on the transition from the isolationism of the period 1945–1955 to the strident unilateralism manifested in the presidential campaign of Barry Goldwater (R-AZ) and the "total victory" approach epitomized by the John Birch Society. In explaining this phenomenon, the "fall" of China, the "conspiracy" mentality represented

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date: 16 April 2018

by Senator Joseph McCarthy (R-WI), and the advent of William F. Buckley's *National Review* are bound to play critical roles. Even more challenging would be a comprehensive treatment of "isolationist"-based critiques of American involvement from the Vietnam War to the present.

Primary Sources

Crucial to the study of isolationism from World War I to the early Cold War are the *New York Times*; the *Congressional Record*, including its extremely important *Appendix*; and congressional hearings on various legislation. For isolationism during World War I and its aftermath, see the *New York American*, the flagship of the Hearst chain; Harvey's *Weekly*; *La Follette's Weekly*; two German-American journals, *Viereck's: The American Weekly* (later *New World* and *The American Monthly*), and Frederick Frank Schrader's *Issues and Events: American Liberal Review*; Albert Jay Nock's radically individualist *Freeman*; and two progressive journals, *The New Republic* and *The Nation*. *The Literary Digest* and *Current Opinion* offer valuable press summaries. For the 1930s down to late 1941, note Hearst's *New York Journal-American*, Robert R. McCormick's *Chicago Tribune*, Joseph Patterson's *New York Daily News*, the *Reader's Digest* (open to both sides of the isolationist-interventionist debate), the *Progressive* (Madison, Wisconsin), and *Scribner's Commentator* (1939–1942). Most remained vocal during the early Cold War.

Certain manuscript collections are extremely significant. The Library of Congress houses the papers of Robert M. La Follette senior and junior, Philander Knox, George W. Norris, William E. Borah, Albert J. Beveridge, Philip C. Jessup, Amos Pinchot, John Bassett Moore, and Robert A. Taft. The Herbert Hoover Presidential Library, West Branch, Iowa, contains the papers of former president Hoover, Robert E. Wood, Verne Marshall, Walter Trohan, and Gerald P. Nye. It also possesses the papers and diary of Felix Morley. The Hoover Institution of War, Revolution, and Peace in Stanford, California, offers the papers of the America First Committee, Lawrence Dennis, Ernest Lundeen, and Freda Utley, as well as the lengthy correspondence of Hoover with military editor John C. O'Laughlin. The University of Oregon library at Eugene houses the papers of John T. Flynn, Samuel B. Pettengill, and Merwin K. Hart. The papers of the Keep America Out of War Congress and the National Council for the Prevention of War are located at the Swarthmore College Peace Collection. Clarence Manion and Sterling Morton are stored at the Chicago Historical Society; Harry Elmer Barnes and George Morgenstern at University of Wyoming Library, at Laramie; Oswald Garrison Villard and William R. Castle at Harvard University's Houghton Library; Edwin Borchard and Charles Lindbergh at Yale University's Sterling Library; Anne Morrow Lindbergh at Smith College; Norman Thomas and America First Committee publicist Sidney Hertzberg at the New York Public Library; John M. Vorys and Frederick C. Smith at the Ohio State Historical Society, Columbus; Frank Gannett, Daniel Reed, and John Taber at Cornell University Library; and Hiram Johnson at the University of California, Berkeley.

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(21.) These are Nye, Arthur H. Vandenberg (R-MI), Bennett Champ Clark (D-MO), and Homer Bone (D-WA).

(22.) Manfred Jonas, *Isolationism in America, 1935–1941* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1966), 42–69.

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date: 16 April 2018

(23.) For a full exposition, see Wayne S. Cole, *America First: The Battle Against Intervention, 1940–1941* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1953); and Doenecke, *In Danger Undaunted*.

(24.) Truman, *New York Times*, March 13, 1947, 2.

(25.) Text of Atlantic Pact, *Congressional Record*, July 20, 1949, 9816–9817.

(26.) Charles Callan Tansill, *Back Door to War: The Roosevelt Foreign Policy, 1931–1941* (Chicago: Henry Regency, 1952), 3.

(27.) Harry Elmer Barnes, *Perpetual War for Perpetual Peace: A Critical Examination of the Foreign Policy of Franklin Delano Roosevelt and its Aftermath* (Caldwell, ID: Canton, 1953), viii, x.

(28.) Hoover, address, December 20, 1950, *New York Times*, December 21, 1950, 1, 22.

(29.) Jonas, *Isolationism in America*, 281.

(30.) For a full exposition, see Doenecke, *Not to the Swift*; Joan Lee Bryniarski, "Against the Tide: Senate Opposition to the Internationalist Foreign Policy of Presidents Franklin D. Roosevelt and Harry S. Truman, 1943–1949" (unpublished PhD diss., University of Maryland, 1972).

(31.) Robert W. Tucker, *A New Isolationism: Threat or Promise?* (Washington, DC: Potomac Associates, 1972). See also Earl Ravelal, *Never Again: Learning from America's Foreign Policy Failures* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1978).

(32.) Among the most relevant of Buchanan's many books are *A Republic, Not an Empire: Reclaiming America's Destiny* (Washington, DC: Regnery, 1999); *Churchill, Hitler, and the Unnecessary War: How Britain Lost Its Empire and the West Lost the World* (New York: Crown, 2008); and *Suicide of a Superpower: Will America Survive to 2015?* (New York: St. Martin's, 2011).

(33.) Eric Nordlinger, *Isolationism Reconfigured: American Foreign Policy for a New Century* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1995), 5.

(34.) Among Bacevich's many titles are *American Empire: The Realities and Consequences of U.S. Diplomacy* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004); *The Limits of Power: The End of American Exceptionalism* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2008); *Washington Rules: America's Path to Permanent War* (New York: Macmillan, 2010); and *American's War for the Greater Middle East: A Military History* (New York: Random House, 2016).

(35.) Joan Hoff, *A Faustian Foreign Policy: From Woodrow Wilson to George W. Bush* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008); and Barry R. Posen, *Restraint: A New Foundation for U.S. Grand Strategy* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2015).

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date: 16 April 2018

(36.) Selig Adler, *The Isolationist Impulse: Its Twentieth-Century Reaction* (New York: Abelard-Schuman, 1957).

(37.) Jonas, *Isolationism in America*, 276.

(38.) Susan Dunn, *1940: FDR, Willkie, Lindbergh, Hitler—the Election amid the Storm* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2013); and Lynne Olsen, *Those Angry Days: Roosevelt, Lindbergh, and America's Fight over World War II, 1939–1941* (New York: Random House, 2013).

(39.) Williams, *Tragedy*; "The Legend of Isolationism in the 1920s," *Science and Society* (Winter 1954): 19–35.

(40.) Stone, *The Irreconcilables*, 1281–1282.

(41.) Cole, *America First; Senator Gerald P. Nye and American Foreign Relations* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1962); *Charles A. Lindbergh and the Battle Against American Intervention in World War II* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1974), 240; and Cole, *Roosevelt and the Isolationists, 1932–45* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1983). See also Cole, "What Might Have Been," *Chronicles: A Magazine of American Culture* 15 (December 1991): 20–22.

(42.) Doenecke, *Not to the Swift*; *In Danger Undaunted*; *Storm on the Horizon*.

(43.) Christopher McKnight Nichols, *Promise and Peril: America at the Dawn of a Global Age* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2011), 341.

(44.) Justus D. Doenecke, *Anti-intervention: A Bibliographical Guide to Isolationism and Pacifism from World War I to the Early Cold War* (New York: Garland, 1987).

(45.) Anthony Gaughan, "Woodrow Wilson and the Rise of Militant Interventionism in the South," *Journal of Southern History* 65 (November 1999): 771–808; and Wayne S. Cole, "America First and the South," *Journal of Southern History* 22 (February 1956): 36–47.

(46.) Congressmen would include Jeff McLemore, House speaker Champ Clark (D-MO), James Slaydon (D-TX), Clyde H. Tavenner (R-IL), Jacob Gallinger (R-NH), Richard Bartholdt (R-MO), James H. ("Cyclone") Davis (D-TX), and Fred A. ("Pop Gun") Britten (R-IL). Among the senators would be former secretary of state Philander Knox, Medill McCormick (R-IL), John D. Works (R-CA), Lawrence Y. Sherman (R-IL), Frank Brandegee (R-CT), James O'Gorman (D-NY), James Watson (R-IN), and Albert B. Cummins (R-IA).

(47.) Studies of Hearst include David Nasaw, *The Chief: The Life of William Randolph Hearst* (2000), and Ben Proctor, *William Randolph Hearst: The Later Years, 1911–1951* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007). For the McCormicks see Richard Norton Smith, *The Colonel: The Life and Legend of Robert R. McCormick* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1997), and Megan McKinney, *The Magnificent Medills: America's Royal Family of*

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date: 16 April 2018

Journalism During a Century of Turbulent Splendor (New York: HarperCollins, 2011). Work should be done on such disparate figures as William Bayard Hale, Lincoln Colcord, Frank Harris, Frank A. Munsey, and Arthur Brisbane as well as German-American editor Frederick Schrader and publishers Bernard and Herman Ridder.

(48.) Among the senators are Louis Ludlow, Clare Hoffman, Bennett Champ Clark (D.-MO), D. Worth Clark (D.-IA), John Danaher (R-CT), Sheridan Downey (D-CA), David I. Walsh (D-MA), Ernest Lundeen (Farmer-Labor-MN), Alexander Wiley (R-WI), Henry P. Dworshak (R-ID), C. Wayland Brooks (R-IL), and Edwin C. Johnson (D-CO). Among the representatives are George H. Bender (R-OH), Francis H. Case (R-S.D.), Carl Curtis (R-NE), George A. Dondero (R-MI), Paul Shafer (R-WI), Harold Knutson (R-MN), Karl Mundt (R-SD), Samuel Pettengill (D-IN), John M. Robsion (R-KY), Noah Mason (R-IL), John M. Vorys (R-OH), Frank B. Keefe (R-MI), Barton Jonkman (R-MI), Roy O. Woodruff (R-MI), and George Holden Tinkham (R-MA).

(49.) Such figures include Joseph M. Patterson, Frank Gannett, Felix Morley, Raymond Moley, George Sokolsky, Hugh Johnson, John Chamberlain, Burton Rascoe, Frank Hanighen, Milton Mayer, Albert M. Bingham, Joseph Patterson, C. Hartley Grattan, Reuben Maury, Frank Waldrop, Selden Rodman, Demeree Bess, Harold Lord Varney, Boake Carter, Freda Utley, Verne Marshall, Amos Pinchot, C.D. Batchelor, John T. McCutcheon, George Eggleston, Upton Close (pen name of Josef Washington Hall), Samuel Crowther, Quincy Howe, and humorist Will Rogers.

(50.) In the world of letters, one should list the entire circle of *Chicago Tribune* staffers: Arthur Sears Henning, Chesly Manly, Willard Edwards, and Walter Trohan; Hearst writers Westbrook Pegler, Karl von Wiegand, and publisher William Randolph Hearst, Jr.; *New York Daily News* columnist John O’Donnell; correspondent Irene Corbelly Kuhn; *Progressive* publisher Morris Rubin; libertarian editor Frank Chodorov; and publishers Devin Garraty, Henry Regnery, and James H. Gipson. In the world of politics, one can add the “new isolationists” noted by Ted Galen Carpenter above as well as Representatives Jesse Sumner (R-IL), B. Carroll Reece (R-TN), John E. Rankin (D-MS), Howard H. Buffett (R-NE), and Dewey Short (R-MO) and Senators Hugh Butler (R-NE), William E. Jenner (R-IN), George W. Malone (R-NV), and James P. Kem (R-MO).

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